Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-2. (Canceled)

3. (Withdrawn) An information network system comprising:

a plurality of computer systems;

a communication network, to which at least some of said computer systems are communicatively coupled;

a functionally coherent and physically distributed cache memory comprising a plurality of memory portions each within a memory of a computer system among a first set of said computer systems; and

a functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device comprising a plurality of data storage portions each within a data storage device of a computer system among said first set of computer systems, at least one of said computer systems being configured to perform data I/O with said functionally coherent and distributed data storage device.

4. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 3 wherein said functionally coherent and physically distributed cache memory is operable as data cache for I/O operations with said functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device.

5. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 3 wherein said first set of computer systems comprises all of said computer systems.

6. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 3 wherein said first set of computer systems comprises a subset of said computer systems.

7. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 6 wherein another computer system, not belonging to said first set of computer systems, can access said functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device.

8. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 3 wherein said functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device is configured as a functionally coherent and physically distributed RAID storage device.

9. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 3 wherein said memory portions are portions of volatile random access memories of said first set of computer systems.

10. (Withdrawn) An information network comprising:

a first set of computer systems each having means for organizing a portion of its memory as a unified multiple-computer system cache memory; and

a second set of computer systems each having means for organizing a portion of its data storage as a unified multiple-computer-system data storage device accessible to at least some of said information network to perform I/O.

11. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 10 wherein said unified multiple-computer system cache memory comprises a portion of memory from each of said computer systems and said unified data storage device comprises a portion of data storage of a data storage device of at least one of said computer systems.

12. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 10 wherein said unified data storage device is configured to be accessible to at least one computer system not belonging to said second set.

13. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 10 wherein said unified data storage device is configured as a distributed RAID storage device.

14. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 10 wherein said portions of memory are portions of volatile random access memories of said first set of computer systems.

15. (Withdrawn) A method for operating an information network comprising:

organizing into a unified data storage device at least one data storage portion from each of a first plurality of computer systems of said network; and

performing data I/O access to the unified data storage device using a distributed cache memory that includes at least one memory portion from each of a second plurality of computer systems of said information network.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 further comprising defining all computer systems in said information network as said second plurality.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 further comprising defining said second plurality as a subset of said information network.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 further comprising accessing said unified data storage device with at least one computer system that is not one of said first plurality.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 further comprising configuring said distributed data storage device as a distributed RAID storage device.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 in which volatile memories are configured as at least some of the memory portions.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 15 further comprising defining said first plurality as a subset of said information network.

22. (Withdrawn) An information network system comprising:

a plurality of computer systems;

a communication network, to which at least some of said computer systems are communicatively coupled;

a distributed cache memory comprising a plurality of memory portions, each memory portion being a portion of a memory of a computer system among a subset of said computer systems, said memory portions being organized to function as a single coherent cache memory; and

a distributed data storage device comprising a plurality of data storage portions, each data storage portion being a portion of storage of one or more data storage devices of a computer system among said subset of computer systems, said data storage portions being organized to function as a single data storage device, wherein said computer systems can perform data I/O with said distributed data storage device and wherein said distributed cache memory is operable as a cache memory for said distributed data storage device.

23. (Withdrawn) An information network comprising:

a plurality of computer systems;

each computer system among at least a first subset of said computer systems having first means for performing distributed caching, wherein each first means provides a portion of memory from its corresponding computer system, wherein all of said first means cooperate to provide a unified system cache memory from among said portions of memory; and

each computer system among said first subset further having second means for performing distributed data storage, wherein each second means provides a portion of data storage of a data storage device from its corresponding computer system, wherein all of said second means cooperate to provide a single data storage device, wherein said computer systems access said single data storage device to perform I/O.

24. (Withdrawn) A method for an information network comprising a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising:

each computer system among a first set of said computer systems providing a portion of its RAM memory, collectively referred to as a plurality of memory portions;

organizing said memory portions into a unified cache memory;

each computer system among said first set of computer systems providing a portion or portions of one or more its data storage devices, collectively referred to as a plurality of data storage portions; and

organizing said data storage portions into a single data storage device; and

providing data I/O access to said single data storage device, wherein any of said plurality of computer systems can access said single data storage device.

25. (Previously presented) An information backup system comprising:

a plurality of computer systems;

a communication network, to which at least some of said computer systems are communicatively coupled;

a functionally coherent and physically distributed cache memory comprising a plurality of memory portions each within a memory of a computer system among a first set of said computer systems; and

a functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device comprising a plurality of data storage portions each within a data storage device of a computer system among said first set of computer systems, at least one of said computer systems being configured to perform data I/O with said functionally coherent and distributed data storage device.

26. (Previously presented) The system of claim 25 wherein said functionally coherent and physically distributed cache memory is operable as data cache for I/O operations with said functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device.

27. (Previously presented) The system of claim 25 wherein said first set of computer systems comprises all of said computer systems.

28. (Previously presented) The system of claim 25 wherein said first set of computer systems comprises a subset of said computer systems.

29. (Previously presented) The system of claim 28 wherein another computer system, not belonging to said first set of computer systems, can access said functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device.

30. (Previously presented) The system of claim 25 wherein said functionally coherent and physically distributed data storage device is configured as a functionally coherent and physically distributed RAID storage device.

31. (Previously presented) The system of claim 25 wherein said memory portions are portions of volatile random access memories of said first set of computer systems.

32. (Previously presented) An information backup system comprising:

a first set of computer systems each having means for organizing a portion of its memory as a unified multiple-computer system cache memory; and

a second set of computer systems each having means for organizing a portion of its data storage as a unified multiple-computer-system data storage device accessible to at least some of said information network to perform I/O.

33. (Previously presented) The system of claim 32 wherein said unified multiple-computer system cache memory comprises a portion of memory from each of said computer systems and said unified data storage device comprises a portion of data storage of a data storage device of at least one of said computer systems.

34. (Previously presented) The system of claim 32 wherein said unified data storage device is configured to be accessible to at least one computer system not belonging to said second set.

35. (Previously presented) The system of claim 32 wherein said unified data storage device is configured as a distributed RAID storage device.

36. (Previously presented) The system of claim 32 wherein said portions of memory are portions of volatile random access memories of said first set of computer systems.

37. (Previously presented) A method for operating an information backup system comprising:

organizing into a unified data storage device at least one data storage portion from each of a first plurality of computer systems of said network; and

performing data I/O access to the unified data storage device using a distributed cache memory that includes at least one memory portion from each of a second plurality of computer systems of said information network.

38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising defining all computer systems in said information network as said second plurality.

39. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising defining said second plurality as a subset of said information network.

40. (Previously presented) The method of claim 39 further comprising accessing said unified data storage device with at least one computer system that is not one of said first plurality.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising configuring said distributed data storage device as a distributed RAID storage device.

42. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37 in which volatile memories are configured as at least some of the memory portions.

43. (Previously presented) The method of claim 37 further comprising defining said first plurality as a subset of said information network.

44. (Previously presented) An information backup system comprising:

a plurality of computer systems;

a communication network, to which at least some of said computer systems are communicatively coupled;

a distributed cache memory comprising a plurality of memory portions, each memory portion being a portion of a memory of a computer system among a subset of said computer systems, said memory portions being organized to function as a single coherent cache memory; and

a distributed data storage device comprising a plurality of data storage portions, each data storage portion being a portion of storage of one or more data storage devices of a computer system among said subset of computer systems, said data storage portions being organized to function as a single data storage device, wherein said computer systems can perform data I/O with said distributed data storage device and wherein said distributed cache memory is operable as a cache memory for said distributed data storage device.

45. (Previously presented) An information backup system comprising:

a plurality of computer systems;

each computer system among at least a first subset of said computer systems having first means for performing distributed caching, wherein each first means provides a portion of memory from its corresponding computer system, wherein all of said first means cooperate to provide a unified system cache memory from among said portions of memory; and

each computer system among said first subset further having second means for performing distributed data storage, wherein each second means provides a portion of data

storage of a data storage device from its corresponding computer system, wherein all of said second means cooperate to provide a single data storage device, wherein said computer systems access said single data storage device to perform I/O.

46. (Previously presented) A method for an information backup system comprising a plurality of computer systems, the method comprising:

each computer system among a first set of said computer systems providing a portion of its RAM memory, collectively referred to as a plurality of memory portions;

organizing said memory portions into a unified cache memory;

each computer system among said first set of computer systems providing a portion or portions of one or more its data storage devices, collectively referred to as a plurality of data storage portions; and

organizing said data storage portions into a single data storage device; and

providing data I/O access to said single data storage device, wherein any of said plurality of computer systems can access said single data storage device.